

NEW CLAIMS

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24. (New) A personal communication and electronic commerce system for use by

A2 participating users and participating merchants, the system comprising:

means for storing a participant ID for each of the participating users and a merchant ID for each of the participating merchants;

a cellular communication network that includes a plurality of geographically spaced base stations that each have a base station identity and are each capable of communication with a mobile exchange that is in communication with a fixed communication network;

a plurality of personal communication devices, each of the personal communication devices being capable of two way voice and data communication and comprising: a unique digital code stored in memory that identifies the device; a display; a user interface for allowing an user to generate digital messages; a transmitter and receiver for wireless communication with the cellular communication network so as to allow a digital messages generated on the personal communication devices to be transmitted by placing a call through one of the base stations;

means for correlating the unique digital code stored in memory of each personal communication devices to a participant ID;

a database of merchant information

wherein each of the base stations comprises means for receiving a digital query messages from one of the personal communication devices and transmitting the digital query messages to a computer; and

A2 wherein, in response to receipt of a digital query message, the computer determines the geographic location of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital query message and retrieves information from the database of merchant information and transmits the information retrieved only to the personal communication device that transmitted the digital query message for display on the display of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital query message.

25. (New) The system of Claim 24, wherein the computer determines the geographic location of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital query based upon the identity of the base station to which the digital query message is transmitted by the personal communication device.

26. (New) The system of Claim 24, wherein the computer determines the geographic location of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital query by receipt of a digital message generated by the personal communication device and transmitted by the personal communication device to the computer.

27. (New) The system of Claim 26, further comprising a global positioning satellite (GPS) system for generating a digital signal indicative of the geographic location of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital query for transmission by the personal communication device to the computer.

28. (New) The system of Claim 24, wherein the database of merchant information contains information pertaining to a plurality of participating merchants located within the geographic territory covered by the cellular communication network, each of the merchants

A2 having a merchant ID that is associated in the database with the information pertaining to that merchant; and means for determining the merchant ID of all participating merchants located within a predetermined geographic proximity of each of the base stations; and wherein the system can retrieve information pertaining to specific participating merchants from the merchant information database and transmit this information to participating users.

29. (New) The system of Claim 28, wherein the merchant information that is retrieved by the system in response to user queries is stored on a database that is accessible by merchants so that participating merchants can add, delete or alter information that is associated with their merchant ID.

30. (New) A cellular position location system for use in connection with a cellular communication network that includes a plurality of geographically spaced base stations that each have a base station identity and are each capable of communication with a mobile exchange that is in communication with a fixed communication network, the system comprising:

a plurality of personal communication devices, each of the personal communication devices being capable of two way voice and data communication and comprising: a unique digital code stored in memory that identifies the device; a display; an user interface for allowing an user to generate a digital geographic location query message; a transmitter and receiver for wireless communication with the cellular communication network so as to allow a digital geographic location query message generated on the personal communication devices to be transmitted by placing a call through one of the base stations; and

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means for determining the geographic location of any of the personal communication devices based upon the identity of the base station to which a digital geographic location query message is transmitted and displaying information concerning the geographic location of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital geographic location query message on the display of the personal communication device that transmitted the digital geographic location query message in response to the query transmitted from the personal communication device.

31. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein the user interface of the personal communication devices, provides the user with a sequence of generic menu choices that become progressively more specific so as to narrow the user's particular query and wherein the menu selections generate a digital geographic location query message that is stored in memory before transmission to a base station.

32. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein the personal communication devices further comprise a range selector through which the user can adjust the geographic range to be queried.

33. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein the digital geographic location query message transmitted from the personal communication device contains the following components: a bit string identifying the personal communication device transmitting the message; a bit string identifying the message as a digital geographic location query message and a bit string indicating the specific nature of the request; and wherein the digital geographic location query message transmitted from the personal communication is received by a base

A2 station and passed along to a mobile exchange along with a further bit string that identifies the base station.

34. (New) The system of Claim 30, further comprising a merchant information database containing information pertaining to a plurality of participating merchants located within the geographic territory covered by the cellular communication network, each of the merchants having a merchant ID; and means for determining the merchant ID of all participating merchants located within a predetermined geographic proximity of each of the base stations and wherein the system can retrieve information pertaining to specific participating merchants from the merchant information database and transmit this information to participating users.

35. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein each base station has a base station ID; and the participating merchants are classified into a plurality of classes and the system can search for merchants by class wherein a base station receiving a digital geographic location query message, passes the digital geographic location query message along with the base station ID to a computer that identifies merchants, if any, that satisfy the query and are located near personal communication device that transmitted the digital geographic location query message and a computer for retrieving information from the merchant information database and transmitting information retrieved from the merchant database to the personal communication device that transmitted the personal communication device for display on the display of the personal communication device that transmitted the personal communication device.

36. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein the merchant information that is retrieved by the system in response to user queries is stored on a database that is accessible by

AZ merchants so that participating merchants can add, delete or alter information that is associated with their merchant ID's.

37. (New) The system of Claim 30, wherein a plurality of the personal digital communication devices has a sponsor merchant associated therewith and includes a button for transmitting a predetermined digital geographic location query message concerning sponsor merchant locations.

38. (New) A computer implemented incentive program for encouraging certain participant actions, the program comprising:

- a plurality of participants;
- a participant ID associated with each participant;
- a redemption rate associated with each participant ID;
- a first reward program under which participants may earn points for certain actions;
- a second reward program through which the redemption rate associated with a particular participant is adjusted in response to certain participant action; and

wherein the redemption associated with each participant ID determines the value of the points earned by that participant pursuant to the first reward program.

39. (New) The computer implemented incentive program of Claim 38, wherein the program is implemented with a system that includes: a participant action reporting unit, a participant ID Input unit; a data storage and memory unit; a redemption unit; an incentive adjustment unit and a computation unit.

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40. (New) The computer implemented incentive program of Claim 38, wherein at least some of the participant redemption rates are non-whole number values.

41. (New) The computer implemented incentive program of Claim 38, wherein a base redemption rate is associated with each participant and the base redemption rate is not the same for all participants and at least some of the base redemption rates are non-whole number values.

42. (New) The computer implemented incentive program of Claim 38, wherein the first reward program is a rebate program under which participants earn points for certain purchases and the second reward program is a variable redemption rate program through which the cash value redemption rate associated with a particular participant is adjusted in response to certain participant action.

43. (New) The computer implemented incentive program of Claim 38 applied to a casino game such that the plurality of participants are players; the players' participant ID is determined by the location of the machine or associated with each participant; the casino game is a first reward program under which participants may earn points that may be redeemed for cash or prizes and the second reward program is a variable redemption rate program through which points may be redeemed for currency based upon the redemption rate in effect at the time of redemption and wherein the redemption rate associated with a particular participant is adjusted in response to certain participant action.

44. (New) The computer implemented incentive program applied to casino gaming of Claim 43, wherein to encourage the player to play frequently and improves utilization of the

A2 underlying casino game, the system includes a timer that determines whether a predetermined time period has elapsed between consecutive play of the casino game and wherein:

if the player has a positive credit winnings balance, the redemption rate is increased by predetermined amount every time the player plays within the predetermined time period;

if the player has a negative credit winnings balance then the redemption rate is decreased by predetermined amount every time the player plays within the predetermined time period;

if the player has a positive credit winnings balance, the redemption rate is decreased by predetermined amount whenever the predetermined time period interval has passed without the player playing; and

if the player has a negative credit winnings balance then the redemption rate is increased by predetermined amount whenever the predetermined time period interval has passed without the player playing.

45. (New) The computer implemented incentive program applied to casino gaming of Claim 43, wherein the variable redemption rate is used to provide an auxiliary game pursuant to which a player that has a net positive balance can place an auxiliary bet that, if won, results in increasing the redemption value of the positive balance at the risk of dramatically reducing the value of the positive balance.; and pursuant to which a player that has a negative balance can place an auxiliary bet that if won reduces the redemption value of the negative balance would be reduced at the risk of increasing the redemption value of the negative balance.

46. (New) The computer implemented incentive program applied to casino gaming of Claim 43, further comprising a display screen for displaying information concerning the

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A2 amount of dollars on deposit, the net results, the current redemption rate, the dollar value of the net results determined by applying the current redemption rate and the current balance and a visual display to graphically illustrate the time remaining.
